

Testimony

In support of Afterschool Grant Funding

To the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Sharon Tripp, Executive Director of Organized Parents Make A Difference, Inc. and chair of the Quality Task Force for state-wide systems of quality in afterschool. We are a non-profit agency that offers before and after school academic enrichment programs in 4 Hartford Public Schools serving approximately 400 students each school day until 6:00 p.m. To keep cost affordable, the State Afterschool Grant funding is essential. It is also important that the process for funding state-wide programs continue to be a competitive process rather than being offered to individual cities.

Our agency serves low income working parents. The bottom line is that if these parents don't have access to quality affordable after school programs then they can't work, or their children are left home unsupervised. We all know what damage can occur when hundreds of children of all ages are left alone. For a family consisting of a single parent and a child our after-school program cost is \$2,000 each year to provide academic and social enrichment for the child. If the parent has no after-school program support and must leave their job, the cost to the state would be upwards of \$50,000 according to the CT Department of Social Services guidelines. So, your choice is a mere \$2,000 price tag, or a \$50,000 price tag.

I ask that you not reduce funding to the state-wide after school programming line so that OPMAD and many other agencies can continue to offer families the academic and social support their children need to succeed, and so that parents can continue to work and will not need State assistance. The loss of this funding would be a high price for the State to pay, but it would be an even higher price for families.

Thank you.

Sharon Tripp
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